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SHORTER ARTICLES AND CORRESPONDENCE

DEGENERATION ACCOMPANYING INBREEDING

It seems now generally conceded that inbreeding per se is not injurious but that when a similar defect in the germ plasma comes from both sides of the family the children do not rise in respect to this character above the parental level. The effect of close inbreeding in small isolated communities is, at any rate, always interesting, and affords an excuse for the following note, based on facts gleaned from a letter sent me by Rev. H. East, a missionary whose headquarters are at Haka, Chin Hills, Burmah.

Rau Vau village has been isolated for about seven generations. It contains about sixty houses and possibly two hundred inhabitants. Of these ten are idiots, many are dwarfs and some hydrocephalic. A number of cases of syndactylism and brachydactyly occur. Mr. East was not able, offhand, to state how these peculiarities are inherited, but it is to be hoped that he will be able to report on this subject later. Certainly, heredity in such a community deserves careful attention.

C. B. DAVENPORT.

A NOTE OF THE PRAIRIE-DOG OWL WHICH RESEMBLES THE RATTLESNAKE'S RATTLE

IN looking over an earlier number of the *AMERICAN NATURALIST*¹ I find a note under this head by F. B. Loomis in which he describes a note of the adult burrowing owl which so closely resembled the rattle of a rattlesnake that not only the members of his party, but their horses as well, were deceived.

. . . it alighted and began a third rattle; and this time all saw its stretched neck, bulging eyes, open beak and vibrating tongue. The whole appearance of the bird indicated assurance that it would thus frighten off any enemy; and it certainly deceived the four plain-bred horses, as well as the men, all of whom had for weeks been familiar with rattlesnakes, and two of them for years.

This reminds me that about sixteen years ago I made some observations on the same subject. It is particularly interesting

¹ *AM. NAT.*, Vol. XLI, pp. 725-726, 1907.